(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. The recommendations of the committee have been examined in consultation with various stakeholders and a comprehensive national civil aviation policy is being drafted.

Haj Pilgrims stranded at Jeddah

8. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that hundreds of Haj Pilgrims were stranded at Jeddah due to cancellation of Scheduled flights to India;

(b) if so, what alternative arrangements were made to bring back the pilgrims; and

(c) the details of period the pilgrims had to remain in Jeddah and the date by which they were brought to India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

New European Regulations for Airlines

9. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that European regulations have come into effect from the 17th February, 2005 whereby airlines can be forced to pay compensation to passengers for flight delays and cancellation for flights originating from European airports;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) how far this would affect the operations of Air India and other international airlines; and

(d) what are the provisions in the regulations for delays on account of natural calamities and causes like fog, etc?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. According to an information paper circulated by European Union during the 35th Session of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) held in Montreal from 28th October to

8th November, 2004, European Parliament have adopted regulation to establish common rules, which provide for compensation and assistance to air passengers in the event of denied boarding and cancellation or long delay of flights.

(c) All airlines operating to EU Member States including Air India are affected by the new regulations. All airlines have represented to European Economic Community (EEC) through International Air Transport Association (IATA) in this regard.

(d) As per the information paper circulated by EU, reasons for delay of flights are not relevant. If the delay is up to 5 hours, passengers are to be provided meals, refreshment, hotel accommodation and transport between the airport and the place of accommodation. If the delay is more than 5 hours, the cost of the ticket will have to be reimbursed.

Fire Accident at Bangalore Airport

10. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the flights at Bangalore airport were disrupted following a fire which broke out at the Airport Terminal building on the 2nd February, 2005;

(b) if so, the causes for the fire accident;

(c) the action taken by the Airports Authority of India in this regard so far; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken to avert such fire accidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The incident was caused due to Electrical Short Circuit.

(c) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has advised the licensee running the restaurant where the fire broke out, to install fire detection system and protection measures as per National Building Code and also to provide training to all staff in the first-aid, fire fighting and evacuation, to repair the premises and to obtain necessary certification from fire and electrical departments before commissioning of kitchen services.